

Holiday Hints for Healthy Habits

This holiday season avoid the Seasonal Seven (the average weight most Americans gain between Thanksgiving and New Year's). With a moderate approach both to what you eat (or do not eat) and how much exercise you do (or do not do), you can avoid packing on extra weight AND still have all the fun of the season. So get a head start on the New Year and do not add extra pounds to deal with in January!

Thanks giving and Christmas Day are notorious for large portions. If there are too many choices for your to narrow down the number, try a small serving of everything.

Remember, a cup serving size is the size of your fist and 3 ounces of meat is the size of a deck of cards. Your eyes may be bigger than your stomach, especially knowing it takes 20 minutes for your stomach to tell your brain you are full. Chew slowly and take your time; talk a lot. It will help you from overeating. In addition, remember...if you do not like it, do not eat it!

Grains are important for health. High fiber food may help control blood glucose and insulin levels in individuals with Type 2 diabetes. Skip the high fat cheeses and crackers, instead, have fresh vegetables with reduced fat dip. During the holidays snack foods are made available all around the house. Try replacing the cookies, candies, and other empty calories with fruit choices.

White turkey meat has less fat and less calories than the dark meat. Cook the dressing/stuffing separate from the turkey to prevent the fat from the turkey to prevent the fat from the turkey from soaking into the dressing. Skim the fat off the gravy with a gravy separator or by refrigerating it. Turkey and salad can be a healthy choice but if you pack on the gravy or heavy salad dressing, it is no longer the healthy choice.

Here are some healthy holiday eating tips:

- Go easy on the alcohol. Not only are alcoholic drinks calorie-heavy, they also increase your appetite.
- Go easy on the sweets. Choose sugar free ice cream or reduced or non-fat frozen yogurt and top with fruit or all fruit spread rather than chocolate or caramel syrup.
- Go easy on the fat; but, don't cut out fat entirely. Fat stabilizes blood sugar and slows down food absorption so you feel full longer.
- Start now – or continue with fitness goals instead of putting them off for a New Year's resolution. Many experts recommend scheduling your workouts, especially during the holiday season.

Now, make this pledge to yourself to get through the holidays without gaining seven to 10 pounds:

Holiday Eating Pledge

I am going to REALLY pay attention to everything I eat and not think of the excuses. I will plan ahead. I will increase my physical activity. I am NOT going to bake cookies or

anything fattening. Out of sight, out of mind! My secret weapon is that before I put anything in my mouth I think where it will go once inside! I will be conscience of what I eat that of being able to watch grandchildren grow up.

Have a Safe Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!